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Alta P. Fowler
Bureau of Security &
Main State Building
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr./Ms. Fowler:

Again I am taking the opportunity to write directly to you, as continuing bias in the press has made it near impossible for the Peoples Temple to be represented accurately except through its own efforts.

Recently, a U.S. reporter, Mrs. Kathy Hunter, went to Guyana claiming to have been invited by the Guyanese Prime Minister, Forbes Burnham, whom she claimed was a personal friend. Although she was allegedly intending to do a story on the Peoples Temple Agricultural Project, Jonestown, she made no prior confirmation of her visit with Rev. Jones or the Project. When Peoples Temple members met with her at her own invitation, they were very cordial to her, and invited her to visit Jonestown, but she refused every invitation. Her refusal was based on being told Jim Jones was not right on the Project site at that time. This woman was obviously not interested in seeing the quality of life and welfare of the close to 1500 residents in Jonestown, which was made available to her. Rather, she threatened the Temple members she met with, that if things didn't go exactly as she wanted them to, it would "go badly" for the Peoples Temple.

The Honorable Vibert Mingo, Guyana's Minister of Home Affairs, who is very favorable to the United States, issued the statement of the Guyanese vernment: "We have investigated and found her (Kathy Hunter's) statements to be totally untrue and that she lied to gain entry into the country which is a violation of our law." Mr. Mingo's statement was definitive, and would have resolved the matter entirely. It was given out to all the media, but NONE REPORTED IT.

Mrs. Hunter was portrayed as travelling to Guyana as an independent journalist, though she herself admitted she was sponsored by several journals. Whomever was behind Mrs. Hunter's trip, they could not have done a more "professional" job of frustrating relations between two countries if they were paid. Mrs. Hunter claimed she was subjected to numerous anonymous harassments, which the media and herself insinuated to be the responsibility of the Peoples Temple and/or the Guyanese government. Numerous episodes were even invented, such as "interrogation", "threats", and "protective custody" -- all attributed to the Peoples Temple in the fashion of experienced yellow journalism.

It is a great shame to see this happen, an affront to Guyana, who has shown friendship towards the United States, and to the high official, the Honorable Mr. Mingo, whose words were blotted out in favor of vicious smears against Guyana and the Peoples Temple. The Peoples Temple project, Jonestown, with its over 1,000 citizens, is very supportive of the Carter Administration policies in the Caribbean, and Rev. Jones has made that known through over 3,000 short wave contacts to points all across the United States and other parts of the world. The Peoples Temple publicly praised the President, and the United States at a recent national cultural festival in the capital, Georgetown. It seems a shame that government itself would not be concerned to counteract forces out to destroy this kind of consistent friendship.

We can only question who is this interested in trying to destroy relations between the United States and a country as relatively moderate and well-disposed towards the United States government as Guyana. What is being done is causing very strained relations where they did not exist before, and is obviously provocation. The entire mold of the Kathy Hunter incident is conspiratorial: No independent, relatively unknown journalist from a small town, travelling thousands of miles away and with no news agency on the scene would provoke an instant media blitz of false publicity and smears if it were not conspiratorial. But it is past time that something is done to bring this to light and deal with it.

Thousands of people are concerned. Over 3,000 people in this area alone have signed a petition to President Carter and other governmental leaders protesting the continuing harssment of the Peoples Temple work, which was recently sent to Washington, and more signatures are on the way from other areas. There are tens of thousands more across the country. (Due to the expenses of maintaining our human service work and free medical clinic in Guyana, we are unable to send you a personal copy at this time.) Not only are people upset that Rev. Jim Jones and Peoples Temple are under attack, when they have done so much to alleviate the hardcore urban problems of unemployment, crime, and drug abuse, but there are obviously efforts to undermine U.S.-Caribbean relations. The American people are tired of the kind of tactics for which the CIA has gained us an unfortunate reputation in so many areas of the world in days past. It is about time it ended.

The other side has yet to be told, but it takes no trickery or deceit to do it, just direct, factual news reporting. A prominent United Methodist minister and his wife just returned from visiting their adult daughters and grandchild in Jonestown, and brought back glowing reports which they shared with the news media in a press conference. Their reports were almost entirely blocked out, in favor of more smears relating to Kathy Hunter. It is a misfortune and a great loss that there is so little interest in good, even spectacular news. The Jonestown community in Guyana could be an enormous asset to the United States, a bulwark of accomplishment and friendship to underdeveloped nations.

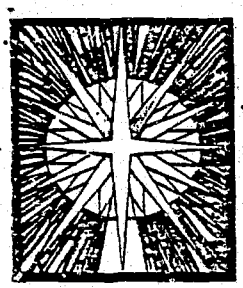
I am enclosing information for your interest -- a pamphlet which recounts and documents the nature of the recent smears. A brochure of responses of visitors to Jonestown, including numerous prominent officials, is being prepared and will be mailed to you soon. You can judge for yourself the blatant contrast between the two and its significance.

We remain appalled and concerned, and commend the issue again to our national leaders.

Sincerely,

H.B. Newell

H. B. Newell



Peoples Temple
P.O. Box 15023
San Francisco, CA.

June 12, 1978

1978 JUN 30 AM 11

OPEN LETTER TO THE MEDIA AND THE COMMUNITY

On Sunday May 28, 1978, the Peoples Temple held a press conference to let the public hear firsthand about Jonestown, Guyana from a widely respected United Methodist minister and his wife who had just returned from visiting their two daughters and grandson at the Peoples Temple Agricultural Project.

Although most of the major media were present at the press conference, only one reported any of the views of Rev. and Mrs. Moore. The Moores' comments resoundingly refuted the allegations against the Temple based on claims of the so-called "Concerned Relatives" group. With all the attention given by the media over the past year to the "charges" levelled against Peoples Temple and Rev. Jim Jones, it is remarkable that there is such disinterest in giving direct refutation any forum at all.

Rather than covering the Moores' glowing reports of the Jonestown community, the media devoted their attention to a new series of "charges" --all entirely false-- relating to the visit of a news reporter, Kathy Hunter, to Guyana. They showed no inclination to search out the facts of the case or even quote the official statement from the Guyanese Minister of Home Affairs,whose comment would have resolved the matte completely. The stories that did appear were so filled with errors and contradictions that the public did not get "news" at all, just more fabrication and speculation.

Any objective observer can conclude that the situation involving Kathy Hunter was a publicity ploy. Examination of the coverage, starting with her claim that the Prime Minister of Guyana had personally invited her to Jonestown (which call she later admitted was probably a "hoax"), shows it was nothing but a smear to insinuate that Peoples Temple could possibly be responsible for Kathy Hunter's misadventures.

Peoples Temple wholly denies the recent allegations made by Mrs. Hunter and the various news media. We would like to know who made the alleged invitation over the telephone to Mrs. Hunter, if indeed there was such a call. We would like to know who was responsible for the false fire alarms and the bomb threats and the alleged "bugging" of her phone; and how the stories of "protective custody" and "interrogation" were invented. It might prove the best lead yet to the source behind the continued smear campaign against the Temple, and the conspiracy which attempted to cut off our members' Social Security checks, to interfere with our amateur radio communications between the U.S. and Guyana, the blackmail, payoffs, bribery, electronic surveillance, and attempts to stir up numerous agency investigations based on false charges.

This new "staged event" is reminiscent of the whole campaign against the Temple which was initiated last year by the alleged "break-in" of the New West magazine office. When Rev. Jones demanded a full-scale police investigation, the police found no evidence that any "break-in" had occurred at all.

The following points will recount what actually happened in Guyana, and enumerate all the contradictions and fabrications that were put out to the public as "news":

The entire premise of Mrs. Hunter's visit to Guyana was false: KATHY HUNTER MISREPRESENTED HERSELF TO GAIN ENTRY INTO THE COUNTRY. The Honorable Vibert Mingo, Minister of Home Affairs for the government of Guyana, stated: "We have investigated and found her (Kathy Hunters) statements to be totally untrue and that she lied to gain entry into our country which is a violation of our law." This statement was released to all the major media. None reported it.

Mrs. Hunter told the Guyanese government that she was a personal friend of the Prime Minister, and that he had invited her to come. Though Mrs. Hunter had been considered a friend by Rev. Jones and the Peoples Temple, she did not inform them of her intended visit until after she had arrived. And though Mrs. Hunter's stated reason for coming to Guyana was to write a story on Jonestown, she refused every invitation to visit the Jonestown project once she was in the country.

Contradictions given out in the press:

1. She went to do a story on Jonestown:

> *"Her sole purpose was to write an objective story after visiting Jonestown..."* (Ukiah Daily Journal, 5/28/78).

She went to do a story on Georgetown:

> *"She was in that South American country to do a story on the camp in Georgetown..."* (KPIX-TV, 5/26/78).

2. She went "simply to talk" to the people there:

> *"According to Mrs. Hunter's husband, George Hunter, Executive Editor of the Ukiah Daily Journal, his wife had gone to Guyana 'simply to talk' to a few relatives of local (Ukiah area) residents serving on the church's 'agricultural outpost' there".* (Press Democrat, 5/28/78).

She went to "investigate":

> *"...a reporter who is in Guyana investigating the controversial Peoples Temple church..."* (KCBS radio news, 5/26/78).

3. She was invited by the Guyanese government:

> *"Raymond (managing editor of the UDJ) said Mrs. Hunter was invited to Guyana by the government there to view Peoples Temple operations in its country."* (UDJ, 5/26/78).

She wasn't invited by the Guyanese government:

> *"She (Mrs. Hunter) ... learned that she had been hoaxed into believing that Guyana's premier, Forbes Burnham.. had invited her to the South American country."* (San Francisco Examiner, 5/30/78)

4. She had the right to be there:

> *"The reporter had every right to go to Jonestown."* (UDJ Editorial, 5/25/78).

She didn't have the right to be there:

> *"...she (Mrs. Hunter) says she was ordered to leave the country because she was told she had lied to the immigration officials."* (Ex. 5/30/78).

5. The Guyanese government asked Mrs. Hunter to report on Jonestown. She was also on assignment for the Ukiah Daily Journal:

> *"...Mrs. Hunter was invited by the Guyana government to report on the activities of Peoples Temple in the South American country... Mrs. Hunter, who frequently works on assignment for the newspaper (Ukiah Daily Journal) sought to investigate the Temple... and to follow up local angles as a result of temple activities at its church in nearby Redwood Valley."* (Los Angeles Times, 5/27/78, as per managing editor of the Ukiah Daily Journal).

Mrs. Hunter was not on assignment for the Ukiah Daily Journal. She is not even employed by them.

"Mrs. Hunter, who formerly worked for the Daily Journal, but is not employed by the paper on this time and was not on assignment..." (UDJ, 5/29/78).

6. The Peoples Temple interrogated and threatened Mrs. Hunter, to keep her away from Jonestown so she wouldn't be able to write a bad article:

"Mrs. Hunter has... spent the last seven days in Georgetown's Pegasus Hotel following intensive 'interrogation' by members of Rev. Jim Jones' church... There was apparently a threat, direct or implied, over whether her story would come out pro-Jones or anti-church..." (UDJ, 5/28/78).

Mrs. Hunter claims she ran into no problems at all until Temple members invited her to Jonestown and she refused:

"Recounting her troubles, Mrs. Hunter said everything was 'sweetness and light' until she turned down an invitation by the church to be its guest at Jonestown..." (Press Democrat, 5/28/78).

7. Mrs. Hunter was placed in "protective custody" to keep the Peoples Temple away from her:

"The Guyanese National Police... quickly posted a guard outside her hotel door... a police escort to the airport... which would indicate the authorities believed Jones' followers were not above additional harassment..." (UDJ, 5/28/78).

Temple members visited her after she was confined to her room in "protective custody":

"...she (Mrs. Hunter) was approached.. by temple members who offered to allow her to visit the mission, but she had remained in protective custody". (Ex. 5/26/78)

Falsifications given out in the press:

1. "PROTECTIVE CUSTODY": Kathy Hunter was never held in protective custody. The Guyanese government found that Mrs. Hunter had entered the country on false pretenses and falsified her papers on entry. They checked out her story, found she had entered the country in violation of Guyanese law, and also international law which is supposed to be respected in all countries. Finally they asked her to leave. She was never in "protective custody". Temple members had very cordially invited her to visit the Project.

The following media carried the false report about "protective custody":

Ukiah Daily Journal; Press Democrat; S.F. Examiner; L.A. Times; KGO radio news; KCBS radio news; KTVU-TV; KPIX-TV; KGO-TV; KDIA; KKHI; KUKI Ukiah; and doubtless other sources of which the Peoples Temple is not aware., as UPI carried this false report.

The many "shocking details" --all entirely false-- include:

She was "seized". (UDJ, 5/26/78);
"She was placed under armed guard" (Ex. 5/26/78);
"Police state tactics" were used against Mrs. Hunter (KGO-TV, 5/28/78);
She was "locked in her hotel for a week" (Press Democrat, 5/28/78);
"A guard was posted outside her hotel door" (UDJ, 5/28/78);
She was guaranteed "an armed guard to the airport" (UDJ, 5/28/78).

Not only is every one of these reports fictional, but what is she claiming to need protection from? We don't carry knives or guns, or anything lethal at all. We voluntarily offered to people concerned to undergo a search, because we are non-violent and carry no kind of weapon.

2. "INTERROGATION": Mrs. Hunter was never interrogated. It is an unmitigated lie that the Temple made anything but the friendliest of gestures to her. Mrs. Hunter was invi-

ted to the Project twice, and refused to go. She was invited to a Temple cultural presentation in Georgetown, accepted the tickets, and never came. When she complained the hotel rates were too high, Temple members volunteered to assist her in moving.

3. "HARASSMENT": The Peoples Temple did not harass Mrs. Hunter in any way. Several media reports insinuated that the Peoples Temple was responsible for the "hoax call" bringing Mrs. Hunter to Guyana, the "mysterious fires in the storerooms and hallways of her hotel", the "five false fire alarms", and the "bomb threats". Mrs. Hunter directly accused the Temple (Ex. 5/30/78) of keeping her under constant surveillance and bugging her telephone.

What is remarkable about all these claimed "harassments" however, is that they are anonymous in character. It would appear that someone was very intent on giving Mrs. Hunter a hard time, and having it falsely blamed on the Peoples Temple.

4. "THREATS": The Peoples Temple did not threaten Mrs. Hunter about a possible story; or threaten her at all.

The truth is the reverse: MRS. HUNTER THREATENED THE TEMPLE WITH BAD PRESS COVERAGE, ALONG WITH HER REFUSAL TO EVEN SEE THE PROJECT. Mr. Mike Prokes and other Temple members met with her for lunch at her invitation May 20th. She told them she wanted to go to the Project and meet with Rev. Jones. Temple members expressed surprise that Mrs. Hunter did not make any advance confirmation of her visit, but even though they had been given no way to make advance preparations for her, she was welcome to come to Jonestown. By her own admission in the Press Democrat, 6/8/78, she was coming to "judge for herself", with the expectation of interviewing select individuals privately, apparently on demand. She states she went so far as to say she would "make my own arrangements through the Guyanese government to visit Jonestown" after acknowledging that the day before,she discovered she was not in Guyana at the invitation of the Guyanese government at all. Although she was the unexpected visitor from 5,000 miles away, no accomodation or hospitality the community of over 1,000 residents in Jonestown could offer was good enough or quick enough for this woman, and she made a "not even veiled threat" to Mr. Prokes and the other Temple members: that if she did not get what she wanted, it would go very badly for the Peoples Temple. She refused to visit the Project at all, and left the table.

Later the same day, Mrs. Hunter apologized for threatening the Temple with her statement. She was invited to Jonestown again several days later, but was hostile and refused to even discuss the matter.

MOREOVER, IT IS HARDLY LIKELY THAT MRS. HUNTER CAME TO GUYANA AS AN INDEPENDENT, FREE-LANCE JOURNALIST TRAVELLING ON HER OWN, AS THE MEDIA HAS PORTRAYED. SHE HERSELF TOLD TEMPLE MEMBERS "SEVERAL TIMES" THAT SHE HAD COME TO GUYANA TO WRITE FOR THE PRESS DEMOCRAT AND SEVERAL OTHER NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES.

NO NEWS SERVICE WAS IN GUYANA COVERING THE "STORY", YET HER TRIP TO GUYANA PROVOKED AN INSTANT MEDIA BLITZ OF FALSE PUBLICITY AND SMEARS.

Mr. Prokes summed up the feelings of the Peoples Temple in the following statement:

"We now believe even more segments of the media are involved with this monstrous conspiracy. This was another attempt to make us the prey for sensational news to destroy us because we are a non-violent socialist church with belief in brotherhood and equality.

"We have a story that is really sensational in terms of building good will between nations and a model community to live in. We will not be bullied or threatened into giving a story to anyone. We will choose those to give the opportunity to see a glimpse into what everyone who has visited has either called a model community or a paradise. If the media wants a story from us, they will have to be objective and separate themselves from this smear campaign which is entirely based on politics."

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XXXV... No. 24 PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN SAN FRANCISCO Thursday, June 15, 1978

Relatives Praise Jonestown, Gy

Recently Peoples Temple held a press conference to let the public hear about Jonestown, Guyana, from people who had just returned from a visit with their relatives at the Agricultural Project. Rev. John V. Moore, former superintendent of United Methodist Churches of Northern California, and his wife, Mrs. Barbara Moore, spent several days with their two daughters and grandson in Jonestown. They came from their home in Reno, Nev., to relate to the public the great beauty and accomplishment of the thriving community in Guyana. The Moores are not members of Peoples Temple. They visited Guyana at their own expense, and traveled to San Francisco from Reno at their own expense for the press conference.

Rev. Moore said, "I'm John Moore, pastor of First United Methodist Church in Reno, Nevada. The two words that come to my mind as I tried to reflect upon my experience (of Jonestown) were 'impressive' and 'amazing.' It boggles the mind to see that great clearing (of land) and to understand how so much could have been done in such a relatively short period of time. I think almost a thousand acres have been cleared, and most of it has already been planted with various crops.

"I had a feeling of freedom. Neither in Georgetown, with 25 or 30 people coming and going all the time with total freedom, nor at the project itself did I have any feeling that anybody was being restrained or coerced or intimidated in any way."

When asked whether people told him they were happy, he responded, "It was so obvious. We talked about what they were doing, and all of them were engaged in some activities or work that was particularly important for them. We talked to anybody and everybody we wanted to, and we were ourselves out walking around the facility. We went to the piggery, the chickery, the dairy, the sawmill, the cassava mill, the nursery."

Rev. Moore went on to tell about the day care nursery, the accredited school, and a health facility that is "the best facility in that whole region in Guyana." Rev. and Mrs. Moore commented on the "beauty" of the inclusion of older people in the community life, and the library with more than 8,000 volumes, where old and young read for pleasure or do research. Mrs. Moore described both the medical and the educational services as "excellent" (one of the Moores' daughters is a nurse, the other is a teacher), and went on to speak of the project as a whole as "a community of caring and sharing with the added dimension of love. In a sense it reminds me of a New Testament community," she reflect- [illegible] word, in the love and concern for all. It is a beautiful, heroic, creative project. It is absolutely miraculous." One newscaster commented Mrs. Moore seemed very impressed and asked would she describe it as "utopian." "Yes," she answered, "it's a lovely utopia."

Other specifics were provided as well about the lifestyle and quality of life in Jonestown: "It is a cooperative...Food is provided for everyone. There's medical care for everyone, and educational opportunities for everyone. There are work needs and opportunities for the members of the community. One of the great things is the opportunity, for some of the younger people particularly, to be learning skills when that opportunity is not present here."

Mrs. Moore added that the housing is well suited to the specific needs of the residents. "It's a complete city, and one thing they do encourage is the nuclear family. You can choose to have your own home, or, if you're a single person, you may live in a dormitory, whichever you prefer. The older folks have their neat little yards and white picket-type fences, with the opportunity to garden, or just sit." Attorney Charles Garry, who was also present, added that, when he visited, he saw them put up a cottage in one day, from the ground on up ready for occupancy.

Garry concluded with remarks about the medical center in Jonestown, headed by a young doctor who was put through medical school by Peoples Temple and who graduated with high honors. He said that he was particularly impressed with "the senior citizens' cottages right around the (medical) compound." They are looked in on by medical helpers first thing every morning. "Medical services are provided free to every resident on the project, and extensive clinic work is done in the surrounding community. The medical compound is something you have never seen, and you probably won't see it, unless you go there. It's almost a miracle."